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## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.	Α	software	management	system,	comprising:
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- a vendor package template that provides a script to install, upgrade, and remove at least one software package;
- a package importer to receive said at least one software package, where said package importer creates an X-package document based on said vendor package template; and
- a package agent to receive, deploy and execute said X-package at a target computer.
- 2. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package importer receives a user identity for recording.
- 3. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said at least one software package includes packages from different vendors.
- 4. The software management system of claim 3, wherein said X-package includes a substantially uniform set of attributes that allows said at least one software packages to be managed in a single user interface.

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- 5. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package importer tags said X-package with a signature.
- 1 6. The software management system of claim 5, further comprising:

an authentication element to provide verification of the X-package by validating the signature in the X-package with a list of certificates trusted by the target computer.

- 7. The software management system of claim 6, further comprising:
  - a script extractor to extract an X-package script.
- 8. The software management system of claim 7, wherein said X-package script includes logic for interacting with a vendor-specific package agent.
- 9. The software management system of claim 7, wherein said X-package script includes logic for interacting with multiple operating systems.
- 10. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said X-package further includes a name of a user who imported said at least one software package.

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- 1 11. The
  - 11. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said X-package further includes hash of package files
- included in said at least one software package.
- 1 12. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package agent checks relevant operating system of said at least one software package.
  - 13. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package agent downloads any needed files.
  - 14. The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package agent reports status.

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and

1	15. A software management system, comprising:
2	a distribution management server including:
3	a vendor package template that provides a script
4	to install, upgrade, and remove at least one software
5	package; and
6	a package importer to receive said at least one
7	software package, said package importer creates an X-
8	package document based on said vendor package template,
9	where said package importer tags said X-package with a
10	signature;
11	a plurality of target computers, each target computer
12	including:
13	an authentication element to provide verification
14	of the X-package by validating the signature in the X-
15	package with a list of certificates trusted by the
16	target computer;
17	a script extractor to extract an X-package script;

a package agent to receive, deploy and execute said X-package at the target computer.

16. The software management system of claim 15, wherein said at least one software package includes packages from different vendors.

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- 17. The software management system of claim 16,
  wherein said X-package includes a substantially uniform set
  of attributes that allows said at least one software
  packages to be managed in a single user interface.
- 1 18. A method for distributing vendor-specific software
  2 to target computers, comprising:
  3 importing the vendor-specific software using a vendor

importing the vendor-specific software using a vendor package template to create an X-package having a script; transferring said X-package to target computers; and processing said X-package script.

- 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising: authenticating the X-package by validating a signature on said X-package.
- 20. The method of claim 18, further comprising:
  extracting the script from said X-package for
  processing.
  - 21. The method of claim 18, wherein said processing said X-package script includes checking a relevant operating system of the vendor-specific software.

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1		22.	The r	nethod	of	claim	18,	wherein	said	processing
2	said	X-pac	ckage	script	ir	ncludes	dov	wnloading	all	relevant
2	files	3								

- 23. The method of claim 18, wherein said processing said X-package script includes reporting status.
  - 24. An apparatus comprising a machine-readable storage medium having executable instructions that enable the machine to:

import the vendor-specific software using a vendor
package template to create an X-package having a script;
 transfer said X-package to target computers; and
 process said X-package script.

- 25. The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising: authenticate the X-package by validating a signature on said X-package.
  - 26. The apparatus of claim 24, further comprising: extract the script from said X-package for processing.